

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 IO-13 AF-08 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10

AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-01

INR-07 INT-05 L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05

CIEP-01 SS-15 STR-04 ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01

SP-02 FEAE-00 OMB-01 /131 W

-----311908Z 126204 /44

R 311425Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2160

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMCONSUL MONTERREY

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 0447

MONTERREY FOR APHIS; GUATEMALA ALSO FOR ROCAP

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECIN, EPAP, PFOR, NU, XK

SUBJECT: LEARNING TO LIVE WITH COFFEE RUSE

REF: (A) MANAGUA 304; (B) MANAGUA 281

BEGIN SUMMARY: PRESIDENT SOMOZA WILL PROBABLY ANNOUNCE BY FEBRUARY 2 A REVISED PROGRAM FOR DEALING WITH THE COFFEE RUST BLIGHT. THAT PROGRAM WILL BE A COMBINATION OF THE COLOMBIAN AND BRAZILIAN APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM, I.E. COMBAT THE DISEASE, CONTROL IT AND LIVE WITH IT. ERADICATION DOES NOT APPEAR FEASIBLE. SUCCESSFUL IM-
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PLEMENTATION OF THE COMBINED APPROACH COULD LEAD TO INCREASED COFFEE PRODUCTION WITHIN FIVE YEARS. SOMOZA ASKED REGIONAL BANK TO SUPPORT A PROPOSED FUND FOR COMBATING THE BLIGHT. EMBASSY CONTINUES TO BE FAVORABLE IMPRESSED WITH AGRICULTURE MINISTER'S HANDLING OF THIS PROBLEM AND SUSPECTS THAT BRAZILIAN EXPERTS MAY BE RIGHT WHEN THEY SAY THAT THE WORST THING ABOUT COFFEE RUST IS FEAR OT IT. END SUMMARY.

1. AFTER HAVING CONSULTED WITH COFFEE RUST (ROYA) EXPERTS FROM BRAZIL, COLOMBIA AND UN'S FAO, NICARAGUAN AGRICULTURE MINISTER SENGEL

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MANN TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE HAS RECOMMENDED TO PRESIDENT SOMOZA THAT NICARAGUA ADOPT A COMBINATION OF THE COLOMBIAN AND BRAZILIAN APPROACHES TO THIS BLIGHT. HE EXPECTS THAT SOMOZA WILL ANNOUNCE A DECISION ALONG THESE LINES BY FEBRUARY 2.

2. THE COMBINED APPROACH MEANS CONTINUATION OF THE PRESENT PROGRAM OF CUTTING INFESTED TREES AND ALL OTHER COFFEE TREES IN A THIRTY-METER RADIUS AROUND EACH INFESTED TREE, AS WELL AS THE TREATMENT OF A MUCH LARGER RADIUS OF TREES WITH FUNGICIDES, AND THE QUARANTINE OF THE GENERAL AREA. EXPANDING ON THIS COLOMBIAN APPROACH, NICARAGUA WILL TRY TO LIVE WITH ROYA BY APPLYING THE LESSONS BRAZIL HAS LEARNED

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THOSE LESSONS ARE THAT THE APPLICATION OF PROPER ANTI-FUNGUS TREATMENT TO COFFEE TREES, AND THE ADOPTION OF MORE MODERN TECHNIQUES OF COFFEE CULTURE, INCLUDING THE REPLANTING OF COFFEE TREES ON A MORE SCIENTIFIC BASIS, CAN NOT ONLY CONTROL THE SPREAD OF ROYA BUT MAY ALSO LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN COFFEE YIELDS.

3. NICARAGUA PRESENTLY HAS ONE OF THE LOWEST COFFEE YIELDS IN CENTRAL AMERICA (LESS THAN 10 QUINTALES PER MANZANA). SENGELMANN ESTIMATED THAT SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF COMBINED APPROACH COULD INCREASE AVERAGE YIELDS TO WELL OVER 20 QUINTALES PER MANZANA AND THAT NICARAGUA'S PRESENT EXPORTS COULD NEARLY DOUBLE (FROM ABOUT 1 MILLION QUINTALES AT PRESENT) WITHIN FIVE YEARS) (1 QUINTAL EQUALS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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101 POUNDS; 1 MANZANA EQUALS 1.7 ACRES.) SENGELMANN REALIZES THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCH A PROGRAM WILL NOT BE EASY.

4. SENGELMANN'S ANTI-ROYA PROGRAM THUS FAR ENJOYS FULL SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT SOMOZA. THE LATTER INQUERATED A SESSION OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN BANK FOR ECONOMIC INTEGRATION (CABEI) IN MANAGUA ON JANUARY 28 WITH AN APPEAL FOR CABEI'S HELP IN COMBATING ROYA WHICH THREATENS COFFEE CROPS THROUGHOUT THE ISTHMUS. SOMOZA ALSO IMPLIED THAT A LACK OF COOPERATION IN CONFRONTING THIS BLIGHT COULD BE INJURIOUS TO THE COMMON MARKET ITSELF.

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MONTERREY FOR APHIS; GUATEMALA ALSO FOR ROCAP

5. SENGELMANN TOLD EMBOFF THAT ONLY COSTA RICA HAS RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO THE JANUARY 19 APPEAL BY REGIONAL MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE AND CENTRAL BANK HEADS FOR THE CREATION OF A \$20 MILLION FUND TO FINANCE ANTI-ROYA OPERATIONS IN THE AREA (REF A). WHEREAS THE GON HAD HOPED THAT SUCH A FUND WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR DRAWDOWNS ON A NON-REIMBURSEABLE BASIS, SENGELMANN OPINED THAT HE NOW EXPECTS THAT THE FUND, IF AND WHEN SET UP, WILL ONLY MAKE AVAILABLE SOFT-TERM LOANS THROUGH CABEI.

6. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT DR. SHAW, THE FAO EXPERT ON ROYA ERADICATION WHO WAS IN NICARAGUA FOR CONSULTATIONS RECENTLY, HAD RE-

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COMMENDED THE DESTRUCTION OF 10,000 MANZANAS OF COFFEE TREES IN AN EFFORT TO WIPE OUT ROYA. (THE AEA OF INFESTATION IS STILL LIMITED TO CARAZO DEPARTMENT WHERE AN AREA OF SOME 6,000 MANZANAS HAS BEEN QUARANTINED. SINCE ISOLATED POCKETS OF ROYA INFESTATION HAVE BEEN FOUND JUST OUTSIDE THE QUANANTINED AREA, THE TOTAL AREA WHEREIN ROYA HAS BEEN FOUND AMOUNTS TO ABOUT 10,000 MANZANAS. ONLY A SMALL PROPORTION OF THE TREES IN THAT AREA HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN INFESTED.) SENGELMANN TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE WOULD HAV ORDERED THE

CUTTING OF EVEN 20,000 MANZANAS OF COFFEE TREES IF DR. SHAW OR THE OTHER EXPERTED COULD HAVE OFFERED REAL HOPE OF ERADICATING ROYA THEREBY. THEY REPORTEDLY COULD NOT DO SO . HENCE HISOPTION FOR THE COMBINED COLOMBIAN-BRAZILIAN APPROACH. (NICARAGUA HAS ABOUT 12,000 MANZNAAS PLANTED TO COFFEE AND THE MAIN COFFEE-GROWING AREAS ARE 50 OR MORE MILES NORTH OF CARAZO.)

7. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY CONTINUED TO BE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH THE MANNER IN WHICH SENGLMANN HAS BEEN HANDLING THE ROYA PROBLEM. WE HAVE BEEN REPORTING DEVELOPMENTS IN SOME DETAIL OVER THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS IN THE HOPE OF PUTTING THE PROBLEM INTO PERSPECTIVE. WE BELIEVE THAT ADDRESSEE POSTS WILL BE BETTER ABLE THUS TO ASSESS THE THREAT TO CENTRAL AMERICAN COFFEE PRODUCTION AND TO COUNSEL THEIR REGIONAL CONTACTS NOT TO PANIC AND PERHAPS JEOPARDIZE THE COMMON MARKET BECAUSE OF THE OUTBREAK OF ROYA IN NICARAGUA. AS SOME OF THE BRAZILIAN EXPERTS WHO CAM HERE PUT IT, THE WORST THING ABOUT ROYA IS FEAR OF ROYA.
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